



**VA**

# U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

2018 **Annual  
Report**

# A note to our Stakeholders



Thank you, Veterans, staff, family members, and community partners for your continued support of VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System. I'm excited to present our annual report for 2018. Since taking on the director role 3 years ago, I've seen this organization undergo quite a transformation especially within the West Los Angeles Medical Center Campus. With the adoption of the Draft Master Plan more than 3 years ago, we confirmed our intent and commitment to creating a safe, welcoming, vibrant, and sustainable community for Veterans and their families on the WLA north campus.

During the past year, we improved in almost every domain in VHA's nationwide performance improvement model, Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning, or SAIL. This of course does not mean we'll stop here, we want to make our Veterans' health care experience the best in all areas so we can continue to be the first choice in health care needs and services.

Access to health care is important to our Veterans, so, we made it our business to have this as a priority. Weekend clinics, open access and convenient care in the community are ways we are working to meet the Veteran where they are and offer better access to health care.

We are proud of our progress helping homeless and at-risk Veterans become and remain stably housed. The 2018 Point-in-Time Count—an annual HUD-led enumeration of America's homeless population—revealed that overall homelessness among Veterans is down 18 percent in Los Angeles County. It is progress like this, that reminds me that there is no higher calling than caring for the men and women who dedicated their lives to serving this great nation.

Amidst all our accomplishments, the bottom line is every VAGLAHS Veteran needs to know that he or she are cared for and respected. The success of our organization depends on each of our 5,000 + employees feeling confident in their abilities and that he or she is providing the best service and care for the brave men and women who served our country.

Please enjoy reading through the pages of our annual report and thank you again for your continued support for our local Veteran heroes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ann R. Brown".

**Ann R. Brown, FACHE**  
*Director*

VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System



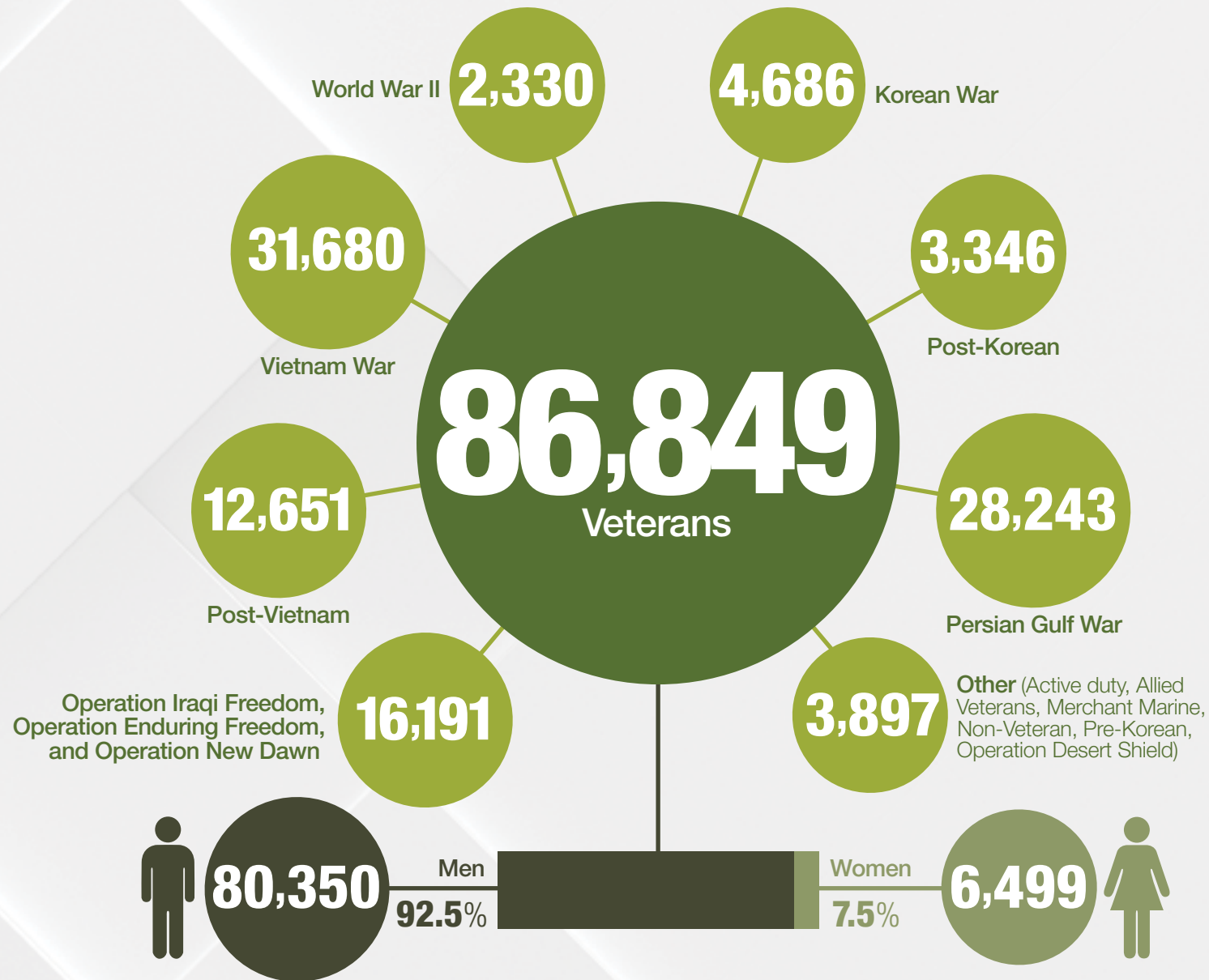
**Robert McKenrick**  
*Executive Director*

Office of Care Centers  
and Clinics in the  
Community (OC4)



**Meghan Flanz**  
*Executive Director*

West Los Angeles  
Campus Draft Master Plan



Outpatient visits  
**1,316,219**  
In-patients treated  
**8,358**

# Who We Are

## Employees

**5,063**

Total

**1,352**

Veteran



## Volunteer Service

**887**

Volunteers

**178,473**

Hours

**\$720,129**

Donations



Monetary  
**\$107,176**  
Activities  
**\$165,020**  
Items  
**\$447,933**

## Research

**\$28,959,849**

Research Funding

**549**

Active Research Projects FY18

**321**

Health Services  
Research & Development  
articles published

Manuscripts

**234**

Abstracts

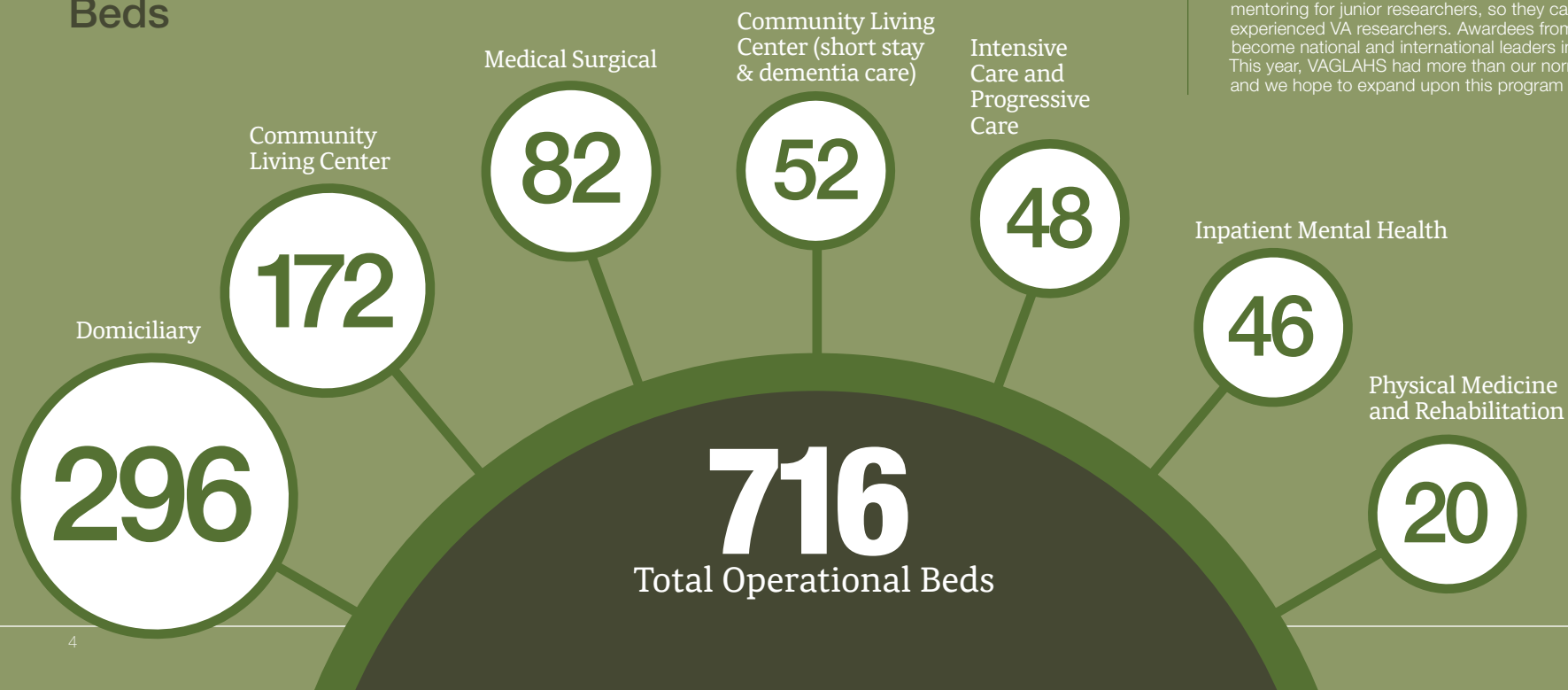
**87**

**6**

Career Development Awards

VA's Career Development Program was established to provide mentoring for junior researchers, so they can learn from renowned, experienced VA researchers. Awardees from this program have become national and international leaders in their research fields. This year, VAGLAHS had more than our normal number of awardees, and we hope to expand upon this program in the future.

## Operational Beds





## Improving Access



### Weekend Clinics

We offered specialty clinics and imaging services to Veterans during the weekend:

West Los Angeles: Optometry • CT • MRI • Ultrasound • Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service • Podiatry • Physical Therapy • Vesting clinic

Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center: Optometry • Audiology • MRI • Ultrasound



### VEText

Veterans receive text message reminders of upcoming VA appointments. The system also allows Veterans to cancel their appointment. Every enrolled Veteran with a cell phone number listed in their health record is automatically enrolled in the program. Veterans may update their phone numbers during check-in at their next appointment.



### Patient Self-Referral Direct Scheduling

Veterans can directly contact Optometry, Audiology, Podiatry, Nutrition, Screening Mammography, Primary Care Social Work and Wheelchair Mobility to make an appointment without a consult or order from their Primary Care Provider.



### Fast Track Patient Care for Oncology

With a phone call to 1-833-309-1349, Veterans with active cancer can find out if they qualify for VA health care benefits and, after enrolling, make an appointment to see a cancer specialist. The “fast track to VA cancer care” initiative allows Veterans diagnosed with cancer, who are not initially enrolled at the VA, to become enrolled and get additional treatment for their cancer.



## Improving Patient Satisfaction

Using Veterans Health Administration comprehensive performance improvement tool called Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning or SAIL\*, VAGLAHS' end of fiscal year hospital Star rating for 2018 improved to a 3 Star.

Comparing fiscal year 2017 to 2018, 4th quarter SAIL data, VAGLAHS improved in almost every domain with large improvements in Mortality, Inpatient Performance Measures, Outpatient Performance Measures, Mental Health, Patient Satisfaction, and Transitions of Care. The two declines were in Length of Stay & Throughput and Adverse Events. However, the Adverse Events remains high-performing with a slight decline.

*\*SAIL is a system for summarizing hospital system performance within Veterans Health Administration. SAIL assesses 25 quality measures in areas such as death rate, complications, and patient satisfaction, as well as overall efficiency and physician capacity at individual VA Medical Centers. Star rating is based on a scale from 1 to 5.*



## Improving Employee Engagement

VHAGLAHS established an Employees Association in September 2017 to stimulate morale amongst employees. Since activation, the EA helped foster good fellowship among employees and their families through weekly employee yoga and Zumba classes, LA Dodgers and Clipper game outings, a bake sale hosted by a celebrity Food Network chef and employee picnics.

# Master Plan

The VA West Los Angeles Medical Center was deeded to the government in 1888 to serve as the Pacific Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. The campus housed as many as 5,000 Veterans until the 1970s, when the focus for this and other National Home properties shifted from housing to health care. In the ensuing decades, VA permitted some third-party land uses on the campus that did not comport with the original deed or with Veterans' best interests. After a lawsuit challenged those third-party uses, VA committed through the Draft Master Plan to restore the campus as a home for homeless and other under-served Veterans and as a thriving community in which Veterans and their families can live, learn, and heal.

**Draft Master Plan website:**  
[www.westladraftmasterplan.org](http://www.westladraftmasterplan.org)



## Implementation Highlights

### Buildings 205 & 208

Contract awarded. Renovation provides approximately 120 additional units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless Veterans on the WLA Campus.

### MacArthur Field

Contract awarded for new construction of approximately 200 additional units of permanent supportive housing for Veterans and their dependents.

### Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

Draft PEIS published for public review and comment - The PEIS studies the entire 388-acre Campus to identify both beneficial and detrimental effects of the redevelopment as required by the National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act.

### Executive-level Leadership

Senior level leadership appointed January 2018 to oversee the Draft Master Plan.

### “Safe Parking” L.A.

VAGLAHS entered into an agreement to operate a safe parking program on the WLA Campus. The program allows qualified Veterans who live in their cars to park overnight in a designated parking lot, with access to case management, restrooms, hygiene stations, and security. This lot hosts 10-15 Veterans every night.

### Principal Developer

Nov 2018, West LA Veterans Collective, LLC was selected as the Principal developer for the WLA Medical Center Campus.

## Partnership Highlights

### City of Los Angeles



Veterans were trained and hired through the city's Umpire Training Courses.



**\$339,369.12**

Total amount the city paid hired Veterans from September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018. This amount exceeds the requirement to pay Veterans \$200,000 during the second year of the agreement plus the wage payment shortfall of \$74,488.58 carried over from the first year of the agreement.



### Brentwood School

Summer at Brentwood is a day camp program providing a safe and nurturing environment where life-long learners entering Grades K-12 engage in a broad range of classes, sports, and activities within our vibrant and diverse community.

**120+**

Summer at Brentwood Camp Program scholarships awarded to children and grandchildren of Veterans.



**1,100**

Veterans have accessed the Veteran Center for Recreation & Education at Brentwood School.



### UCLA

Legal Clinic Center assists Veterans in securing benefits and representation to address infractions that might curtail access to housing, employment or services.

**278**

Veterans utilized the legal clinic.

**388**

Legal matters handled.

**5,300**

Hours of legal service.



VA/UCLA Family Wellness Center provides Veterans and their families, including parents, couples, and children, coordinated, family-centered services including educational and preventive care designed to mitigate stress and enhance well-being.

**150**

Members utilized the Wellness Center.



**\$303,000**

Paid in fair market value to VA for land use of Jackie Robinson Stadium.



## Decreasing Veteran Homeless

The 2018 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count—an annual HUD-led enumeration of America's homeless population—revealed that overall homelessness among Veterans is down 18% in Los Angeles County and the number of unsheltered homeless Veterans decreased by 2% (3,370 in 2017, 2,667 in 2018) in Los Angeles since 2017. While there is still more work to do, the decrease signals that our

strategies are working—bringing us a little bit closer to ending Veteran homelessness in Los Angeles. PIT Count data provides a national “snapshot” of homelessness on a given night in America. It is one of many tools that VA staff and partner agencies use to determine where to target resources to help Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.



# Mental Health

## Open Access

Mental Health now provides Open Access Clinics at the WLA Medical Center and two Community Based Outpatient Clinics: Los Angeles Ambulatory Care Center (LAACC) and Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center (SACC). With Open Access, patients assessed as requiring services could be seen on the same day as their request! For fiscal year 2018, 8,217 Veterans were seen via Open Access clinics. In addition, Online Direct Scheduling for Mental Health allows an established patient to schedule an appointment online through Open Access clinics.

**8,217**  
Veterans Seen

## Trauma Recovery Services

Trauma Recovery Services (TRS) has evolved into an expanding program that now serves more Veterans, uses evidence-based therapies and is aligned with Department of Defense guidance. TRS provides a full range of services to individuals diagnosed with trauma-related disorders using the most appropriate psychotherapeutic techniques, evidence-based psychotherapies and psychiatric medication evaluation and treatment. TRS is located at 3 sites within VAGLAHS (WLA, SACC, and East LA), with a 4th program scheduled to open at LAACC in FY19. The TRS program at WLA was formerly known as POST/PTSD Outpatient program.

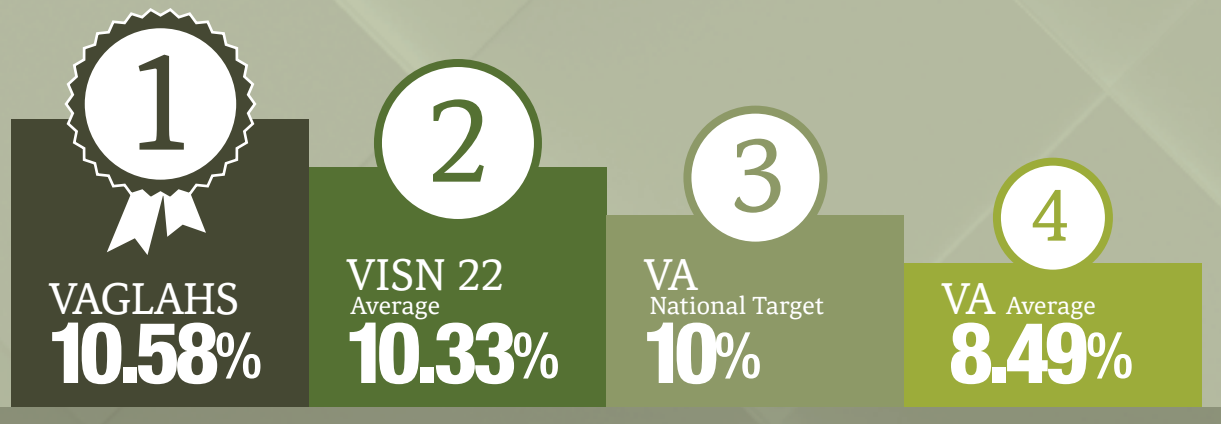
### NEW

#### Trauma Recovery Services Program

- ✓ Female Combat Veterans
- ✓ All military trauma (FY19)
- ✓ Aligned with 2017 Joint VA/DoD PTSD treatment guidelines
- ✓ Access to treatments regardless of group program enrollment
- ✓ Full integration with mental health
- ✓ Psychiatric medication evaluation and treatment
- ✓ Collaboration with other programs
- ✓ Open to Veterans exposed to combat
- ✓ Group and individual therapy

## Patient Aligned Care Team Integration

In 2018, Mental Health exceeded standards for Patient Aligned Care Team percentage of primary care patients engaged in primary care mental health. This approach involves providing services to patients in a collaborative framework within primary care teams and allows patient meetings with the behavioral health provider as a routine primary care service.





## OLD

### POST/PTSD Outpatient Program

- ✗ Female Combat Veterans
- ✗ All military trauma (FY19)
- ✗ Aligned with 2017 Joint VA/DoD PTSD treatment guidelines
- ✗ Access to treatments regardless of group program enrollment
- ✗ Full integration with mental health
- ✓ Psychiatric medication evaluation and treatment
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## What is the MISSION Act?

The VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act of 2018 was signed into law by the president on June 6, 2018. The Act will fundamentally transform VA's health care system, fulfill the president's commitment to provide Veterans with more choice in their health care providers and prevent a funding shortfall in the current Veterans Choice Program.

The Act includes four main pillars:

1. Consolidating VA's community care programs.
2. Expanding the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to eligible Veterans of all eras.
3. Providing VA the necessary flexibility to align its infrastructure footprint with the needs of our nation's Veterans.
4. Strengthening VA's ability to recruit and retain quality health care professionals.



## What is it NOT?

The MISSION Act is not a step toward privatization. It's about significantly improving Veterans' experience and enhancing their access to care.



## Key Elements

### Community Care

The Act consolidates VA's multiple community care programs, including the Veterans Choice Program, into a new Veterans community care program, which is easier to navigate, for Veterans and their families, community providers and VA employees.

### Caregivers Program

The Act expands eligibility for VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) by including eligible Veterans from all eras of service. Post-9/11 Veterans have benefited greatly from PCAFC. Expansion will occur in two phases, starting with those who were injured on or before May 7, 1975, with further expansion beginning two years later. The expansion timeline is still under development.

### Asset and Infrastructure

The Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) process in the Act will provide VA the necessary flexibility to align its infrastructure footprint with the needs of the nation's Veterans.

### Recruit and Retain

VA is focused on recruitment to ensure Veterans are receiving the care they have earned. This Act will allow for additional, improved recruitment efforts, including a new scholarship program, greater access to VA's education debt-reduction program and improved flexibility for providing bonuses for recruitment, relocation and retention.

### Information Sharing

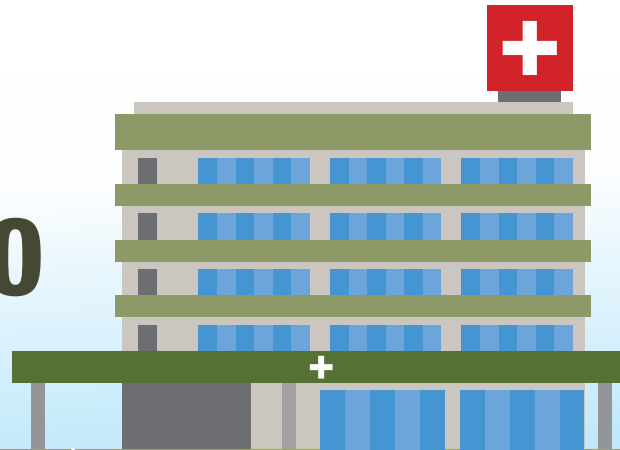
For the purpose of providing health care or other health care related functions, the Act allows VA to share patient information that would otherwise be protected. It also allows for disclosing this information for purposes of recovering or collecting reasonable charges for care furnished to, or paid on behalf of, a Veteran in connection with a nonservice-connected disability.

[www.missionact.va.gov](http://www.missionact.va.gov)

# Fiscal Budget

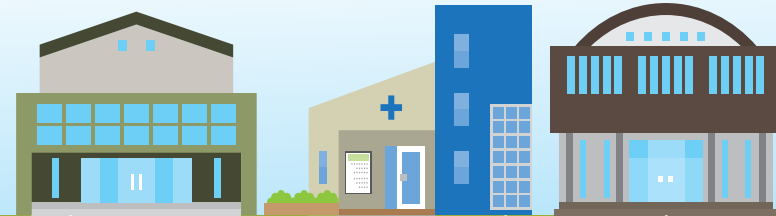
Total Budget FY 2018

**\$812,854,680**



**\$654,423,691**

Medical



**\$82,709,720**

Facilities

## Awards



Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing. Anabelle Quintanar MSN, RN, received the 2018 **VA National Secretary Award for Exceptional Excellence in Nursing and Advancement of Nursing Program for all the VA.**

**Phlebotomist of the Year** awarded to Santa Maria CBOC Phlebotomist Maribel Vejiga by the California Association Medical Laboratory Technology.

Dr. Karl Kawakami, DDS, received **VHA's Leadership in Dentistry Award** for outstanding contributions in support of Veterans and the mission of VHA Dentistry.

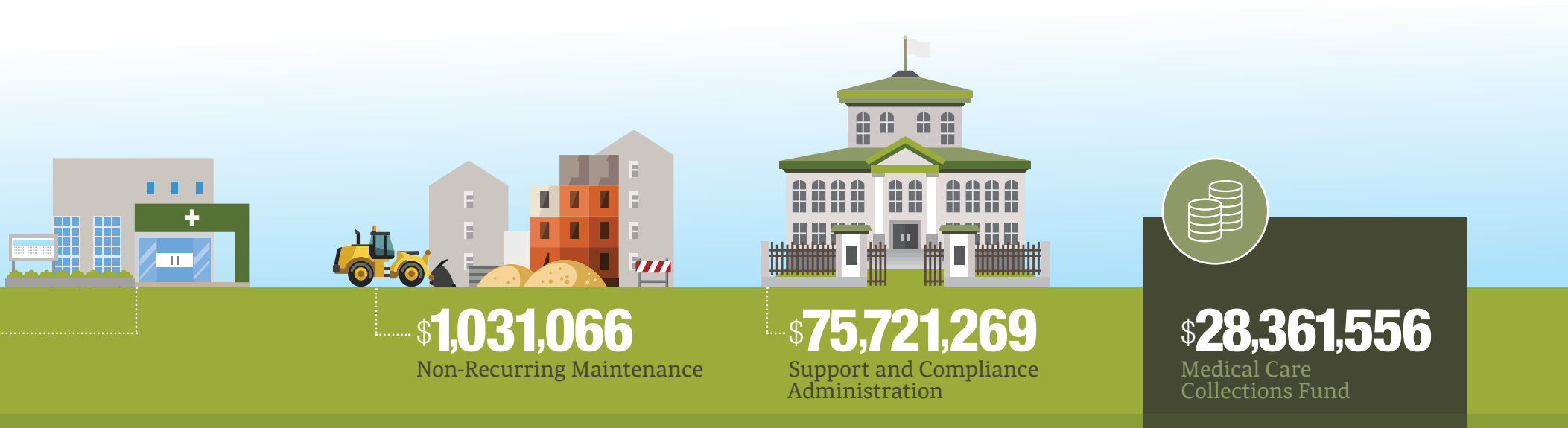
Miranda Wichelns, Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center Hospice social worker, received **Honorable Mention for Schwartz Center's 2018 National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award.**

Dr. Catherine Sarkisian received the **UCLA Multi-Campus Program in Geriatrics and Gerontology, Arthur Cherkin Award** in June 2018.

Health Coach, Lindsay Levitan, received the **Outstanding Member of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration Award** from Department of California, Disabled American Veterans on June 2018.

VAGLAHS received the **2018 Energy Management Program Sustainability Award** for the VA Laundry Plant Modernization project, West Los Angeles Medical Center Campus. The project replaced antiquated laundry equipment with state of the art energy and water saving and recycling equipment. The project also converted old steam supplied piping to natural gas heated high efficiency dryers/tumblers with an automated wet lint collection system. Modernization project provides annual savings of approximately 9,800,000 gallons of water and 113,000 therms of thermal energy.

Dr. Elizabeth Yano, director of the HSR&D Center for the Study of Health Innovation, Implementation and Policy at VAGLAHS, was honored with the **Disabled American Veterans' Special Recognition Award** for her extensive research and work on behalf of the nation's women Veterans.



## Veteran Voices

A small sampling of recognitions received from Veterans and their loved ones about the care provided by VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System:

"I spoke to a woman named Sona. She was extremely helpful. I asked question after question and she answered every one of them. She even looked up things on the internet for me. Sona truly exemplified the spirit of the VA...I didn't feel like I was just another part of her job when I spoke with her. I felt like a person. She should be commended for her service."

"Our first visit to Bakersfield CBOC and I wanted to say thank you to your staff and volunteers. Your staff were friendly, helpful and professional. The experience on a scale from 1-10 was 9.5 (I never give 10s). We arrived a little early because we didn't want to be late, but you guys took care of us from the time we came in. You guys Rock!"

"Richard John APRN, has been my provider for several years. He has gone above and beyond the call of duty and has even provided extra care even when the clinic was closed at 4:30pm. He often goes the '2nd mile' by

conducting appointments over the phone when I was in Oklahoma on official business."

"Dr. James Tomlinson is incredibly skilled, as a man of medicine and a surgeon. Due to the nature of my surgery, I could barely walk immediately afterwards, but in two weeks, I was walking up and down the stairs in a normal, albeit slow, manner. I was constantly improving in ways that I could readily ascertain. Dr. Tomlinson is truly professional and an asset to the community."

"I went everywhere in the system to try and get real help...and then my prayers were answered, I met Thomas Casados. This gentleman took time to listen to me, gave me access to a shower and food and guided me to a place to get real sobriety, recover mentally and physically, and more. I can only pay this back for the rest of my life by first staying sober and healthy and helping others in need."





[www.losangeles.va.gov](https://www.losangeles.va.gov)

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